

## **Comparative Analysis**

Josef Esser and Joachim Hirsch's work, *the crisis of fordism and the dimensions of 'post-fordist' regional and urban structure* (1989), not only effectively explains the crisis of post-fordism and the dimensions of a post-fordist urban and regional structure in the Federal Republic of Germany, but it can also help the reader make sense of and better understand the processes at work in areas or urban centres out with the FRG. This paper will therefore use Esser and Hirsch's work as a means of better understanding the historical changes in the capitalist development of two post-industrial cities, Chicago and Glasgow. Connections between social developments and spatial structure can be clearly illustrated as one considers the transition from fordism to post-fordism in these two once upon a time titans of industrial economic development. Along with considering whether there are any shortcomings in Esser and Hirsch's work with regards to these locations, this paper will conclude with what it is hoped will be an informed argument showing how this country's development policies are being influenced by events in the United States.

Glasgow's fortunate position on the banks of the River Clyde was one of the factors that ensured its success as a centre of commerce. Given the proximity of coal producing areas such as Lanarkshire, access to the sea provided by the Clyde and its tributaries combined with Glasgow's educational institutions and capital accumulated through involvement in the tobacco trade, it is perhaps no surprise that the Clyde would go on to boast the production of around ½ of the world's shipping tonnage by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. These successes however, were not without their social costs as Glasgow swelled with immigrants arriving in response to the employment opportunities afforded. 'A principle contributory factor to these unprecedented levels of expansion was the number of immigrants and in-migrants, largely from Ireland and other parts of Scotland, who came in search of work and improved prospects' (Maver, I. 2000: 84). It was therefore unfortunate for them that 'Glasgow's unfettered capitalism led to a social crisis and the return of major epidemics' (Hamilton, N. H. 1981: 146).

Slowly but surely however, conditions improved both in terms of work related hazards and the dangers associated with living in the overcrowded, disease-ridden

areas of Glasgow's old town. Unions eventually became more influential in addressing work related health risks and national and municipal authorities realised that an unhealthy population was not a prosperous and sustainable option. Besides this, '...surrounded by the great unwashed and threatened by cholera, jittery leaders of society feared that disease might spark insurrection or might spread to them' (Porter, R. 1997: 405). The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to further expose the general ill-health of the nation as levels of pitiful fitness, particularly among the working classes were highlighted by the outbreak of war in South Africa.

Ironically perhaps, just as questions with regards to the nation's physical health were being addressed more fervently than ever before, the economic well-being of one of Britain's most lucrative manufacturing industries was under serious threat, with few people if any, able to foresee the tragic consequences of international competition and new technology on Clydeside shipbuilding. Other industrial nations began to compete in shipbuilding, most notably Germany as they strove to illustrate the scope and strength of their country's naval might. Pre WWI this competition marked an upturn in Ministry of Defence orders for Clyde yards as the naval race for superiority between Britain and Germany got into full swing. Only after WWI were the underlying ailments of an industry reluctant to modernise fully realised. Nevertheless, WWII saw fortunes improve again propped up by MoD orders and also for a few years after the war as lost tonnage was replaced.

It is the post-WWII period (as far as Clydeside is concerned) which is perhaps most significant to this paper as parts of Esser and Hirsch's work can be effectively superimposed onto the Glasgow/Clydeside situation at this time. Here one can see their work reflected in the various facets of Clydeside shipyard life. It is difficult to ascertain the degree to which Taylorism permeated the consciousnesses of Clydeside bosses, however Frederick W. Taylor's prediction in 1911 was ultimately proved accurate enough by events on Clydeside. 'In the future, the system (rather than the individual workers) will be first' (Tindall, G, B. and Shi, D, E. 2003: 972). Post-WWII and before major closure and downturn of activity in the area, there is strong evidence of an 'employee society' on Clydeside. 'Whatever the job a person held in the yards, however, whether as a labourer or director, the pride in the industry was such that they all regarded themselves first and foremost as shipbuilders' (Bellamy,

M. 2001: 23). Beyond the yard gates many social activities were directly linked to an individual's place of employment. 'Football of course, was not the only sport that shipbuilders enjoyed ... workers also set up many special interest clubs. There were photography, gardening, chess and model-making clubs, and some yards had pipe bands as well as amateur dramatics and choral societies' (Bellamy, M. 2001: 98). Post WWII was also a period when shipyard unions became more organised and the British welfare state came into being. As Hirsch and Esser point out there followed '...the development of bureaucratised and centralised trade unions with a tendency for all workers to be included in the right to representation and thus to have the opportunity to conclude comprehensive pay agreements and the expansion of the bureaucratised welfare state' (Esser and Hirsch 1989: 421). This inclusion of workers was what Esser and Hirsch describe as the essential characteristic of a Keynesian regulation relationship. Socio-political relationships were legitimised and interestingly class conflict was institutionalised. 'In many ways they (the bosses) abused their power by inflicting random acts of management on their workers, just to show them who was in charge. Workers could be fired on the spot for the slightest reason ... a deep-rooted hatred of the bosses was bred among the workers. The rigid caste system that developed among the different categories of workers also led to conflict' (Bellamy, M. 2001: 154).

The breakdown of this system of regulation is what is considered to be what put fordism into crisis. The removal of the hegemonic relationship whereby the individual had a voice with which to hold his employer, or indeed his government to account heralded major closures on Clydeside during the 1970s and early 80s. These changes in the mode of accumulation and regulation were not unique to Britain; indeed it could be argued that while the United States led the way with fordism post-WWII, it too was partly responsible for the crisis of fordism. A significant shift in US politics was underway during the 1970s, which would carry Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980. The 1980 census revealed that in the US the proportion of the nation's elderly people was increasing. This coupled with the reality that many were migrating to the 'Sun-belt' states of the south and west, and also that increasing numbers of people in the conservative regions of the country where opposition to 'big government' was endemic '...meant that demographics were carrying the US toward Reagan's conservative political philosophy' (Tindall, G, B. and Shi, D, E, 2003:

1435). The transatlantic political influence of Reagan's premiership should perhaps not be underestimated. The mutual backslapping and frequent exchange between Reagan and Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s as they congratulated each other over their right-wing views and policies sounded the death-knell for fordist capitalism as the absence of 'institutional thickness' at government level left it with no hegemony. 'The crisis continues: a new stable international, hegemonic post-fordist development has so far been unable to impose itself' (Esser and Hirsch 1989: 421).

Fordism's effects on spatial structure and the changing patterns of space brought about by the crisis as described by Esser and Hirsch can be observed in a Glasgow context, along with the city's various efforts to reinvent itself as fordist capitalism became ever more unworkable. David Harvey's *Social Justice and the City* uses the history of urban development as a starting point and demonstrates how '...the inequalities of the capitalist labour process play themselves out in spatial terms and then how the ensuing public space itself exacerbates inequality and exploitation' (Fainstein, S. 1996: 20). 'The strict social hierarchy within the yards could also be seen on the outside in shipbuilding communities such as Partick, Govan and Clydebank. The poorest workers lived in tenements overlooking the yards while the better paid lived progressively further away from the yards, with the employers living well away from the dirt and noise of the yards' (Bellamy, M. 2001: 98). These living arrangements were not unique to shipbuilding of course as Glasgow could boast of at one time playing host to a plethora of other industries.

Glasgow, like Chicago, could also be described as a city of immigrants and in some respects a segregated city. Unlike Chicago however, where segregation is most commonly between black and white people, Glasgow's segregation largely runs along religious lines. These religious divides were - it could be argued - exacerbated by fordism whereby Catholics were often discriminated against in terms of employment and housing. These divisions can still be observed today when passing through a predominantly 'blue' area such as Govan or Ibrox to a 'green' area such as the Gorbals. This illustrates what Esser and Hirsch describe as contradictory social homogenisation and individualism, for as divisions existed and exist along religious lines in Glasgow, the breakdown of the traditional life milieu was accelerated, the labour condition generalised and the family nuclearised as a result of fordism.

The large-scale imposition of the motorcar was a major factor in Glasgow's transition from a fordist to a post-fordist town. The car offered its owner a greater degree of mobility and flexibility with regard to place of residence and leisure activities. 'The automobile freed people from the tracks, widened the choice of residential location and led to a decline in the attraction of traditional urban cores' (Pacione, M. 2005: 580). Living in one of the 'New Towns' was now a realisable possibility and sweeping changes in leisure pursuits were stimulated by the extension of Scotland's motorway network, rendering Clyde steamers obsolete. 'Before the arrival of a comprehensive road system, the river provided the main communication link between Glasgow and the west coast' (Jeffrey, R. and Watson, I. 1998: 33). Car manufacture in Scotland also suffered a similar fate to that of shipbuilding. The last mass-produced car to be manufactured in Scotland was the Hillman Imp. 'The car plant was originally situated at Linwood as part of the regional policy in the 1960s. It closed in 1980 when economic policy no longer favoured government support for ailing industries' (Jeffrey, R. and Watson, I. 1998: 96). 'The crisis of fordism was therefore a crisis of the fordist town' (Esser and Hirsch 1989: 424). It is evident therefore that Glasgow as a fordist town was/is a town in crisis and in many respects faces a number of the same future challenges as Chicago. It is now necessary to explore Chicago's development using Esser and Hirsch's framework in order that relevant observations and coherent conclusions can ultimately be made as Chicago is compared with Glasgow.

Despite being 'younger' than Glasgow, Chicago's history is no less remarkable as it overtook many other US cities to become the nation's largest in a time span of only about 100 years. Like Glasgow – although during a slightly more recent period – Chicago became the workshop and crossroads of the US made possible by its location at the lower end of Lake Michigan, connecting it '...first with the Atlantic and then with the Pacific, they (the railroads) made it the focus of a growing transcontinental network' (Mayer, H, M. and Wade, R, C. 1969: 35). The city's early leaders made two very significant decisions during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, which were to complement and extend the city's already strong appeal. The most well known perhaps of these decisions, was to preserve the majority of the city's shoreline along Lake Michigan for public use. Remarkably, despite US frontier mentality much of the area remains

in public use to this day. The less well-known decision took place in 1889 when voters in a surrounding 120 square mile area elected to be annexed to Chicago, thus quadrupling the land area of the city overnight (Mayer, H, M. and Wade, R, C. 1969). Several other annexations took place over the next 25 years until Chicago reached its present size of 227 square miles by 1915 (Kaufman, J, L. 1998).

It was not only Chicago's maritime connections that rendered it a great city, but like Glasgow its hinterlands were also a major catalyst for growth. Ease of transport to and from Lake Superior brought iron ore, neighbouring Pennsylvania, Ohio and Southern Illinois provided coal and with limestone from Michigan the three basic ingredients for steel '...had their rendezvous along the forks of the Chicago river' (Mayer, H, M. and Wade, R, C. 1969: 52). After the civil war, Chicago's expansion continued as it was no longer confined to the local market and could expand into the national and international. It is interesting to note that the Pullman Palace Car Company were early pioneers of a development, many of whose '...features were forerunners of modern suburban developments' (Cutler, I. 1969: 56). Pullman's 'company town' with its rail car factories and worker's homes, was exceptionally well planned for its time with a '...shopping centre, church, theatre, library, firehouse, school, hotel and bank'. Unlike earlier efforts of this kind Pullman's worker's homes were separated from the factories and was '...beautifully landscaped with gardens, parks and even a small artificial lake' (Cutler, I. 1969: 56). In some respects the Pullman experiment could be viewed as a microcosm of the wider politico economic picture. In the US in particular it is no surprise that such a heavily paternalistic and some would say non-democratic venture failed. In a country so preoccupied with individual rights and freedoms, an autocratic structure of residence, employment, leisure, retail and even spirituality had its days numbered from the very start.

Chicago's industries expanded unabated throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, taking advantage of technological advances and hindered largely only in spatial terms. Unlike Glasgow, where manufacturing became uncompetitive on a national scale and largely moved overseas, many of Chicago's industries only shifted out of necessity to beyond the city boundaries as space in the city became limited. 'Power and population in the modern city have shifted tremendously to the suburbs; and the gigantic corporations that made Chicago a world leader of industrial change are

giving way to smaller, more adaptive firms, knowledge-based concerns linked to one another by modern information technologies' (Johnson, E, W. 2001: XVI). '...small and average-sized businesses are involved even more closely in the production and product innovations ... structural linking of the industrial and tertiary sector is being deepened considerably' (Esser and Hirsch 1989: 426).

Burgess, an aficionado of the Chicago School of Human Ecology designed a concentric-zone model of urban growth, which is based on the concept of a city with a large population undergoing rapid growth largely due to '...the arrival of ethnically diverse immigrants from overseas' (Pacione, M. 2005: 142). The model also assumed private ownership of property along with an absence of restrictions on the manner in which property owners could develop their own land. These and other conditions were met by the city of Chicago as between 1880 and 1910 the population increased twenty-fold, and in subsequent decades, manufacturing spread ever further outwards from the centre leaving the kind of inner city problems that plague most large cities today; '...congestion, plant obsolescence, high taxes, insurance rates, crime, poor schools, racial conflict, labour problems and pollution' (Cutler, I. 1969: 58), many of which also plagued Glasgow in earlier times. Industrial migration out of the city has therefore been detrimental to Chicago's economic base. Increased unemployment among poorly educated and unskilled, particularly black or Hispanic communities has left Chicago's authorities with the same difficulties that faced Glasgow's.

The changing role of what was once the heart of both cities is remarkably similar in effect. The following applies almost equally to both; '...missing are the bustle of hundreds of boats on the river, the clanging of old street cars, much of the manufacturing activity...' in their place are '... the ubiquitous motor vehicle... and the array of ever taller office and residential skyscrapers, occasionally relieved by small plazas' (Cutler, I. 1969: 65). Admittedly Glasgow has nothing to rival the John Hancock or Sear's Towers, but the conversion of Merchant City buildings into office and residential facilities reflect a similar process.

There are also what tend to be very ideologically similar (and equally worrying) strategies for coping with the post-fordist economy being put forward by Chicago and Glasgow authorities as they strive to come to terms with the crisis of fordism. At first

glance the Chicago plan for the twenty first century looks like a fair, positive, democratic expose of Chicago's challenges and provides an outline of possible policies that could sustain future development. Nonetheless, reading between the lines reveals that the central ideology underpinning the entire volume is in itself questionable. The reliance on what it refers to as 'Chicago's swaggering self-confidence' is an aspect of the volume that very definitely smacks of 'environmental determinism'. 'As historian David S. Landes writes in his important book about why some nations create wealth and others do not...' (Johnson, E, W. 2001: XV) he echoes Daniel Burnham's affiliation with the 'Chicago Spirit' with a significant degree of secular optimism. While Blaut agrees that for most geographers '... the theory of environmental determinism is a musty, fusty relic of the past' (Blaut, J, M. 2000: 1), he nonetheless feels that scratching the surface of some contemporary work can reveal remnants of some of these less than helpful responses. In his article *Environmentalism and Eurocentrism* Blaut singles out Landes' *Wealth and Poverty of Nations* and Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, convincingly discrediting both as self-satisfied and self-justifying Eurocentric nonsense.

Various schemes have come and gone over the years in a bid to reinvent the city of Glasgow. The Garden festival of 1988 for example, drew visitors to the city in their thousands and earmarked large former industrial areas on the south bank of the Clyde for redevelopment. 'The abandoned wharves of Prince's dock on the River Clyde in Glasgow were closed in the 1970s, and partially filled to provide the site for the 1988 Glasgow Garden Festival as part of the city's re-imaging strategy. The site is under redevelopment as a residential-office-entertainment complex' (Pacione, M. 2005: Plate 3). The city in general has been promoted more recently by the 'Glasgow's miles better' campaign and there are now numerous venues for conferences, concerts, theatre productions and the like. These attractions are all very well but it could be argued that policy affecting disused industrial sites or areas of obsolete dockyards is predominantly capital-driven with the intention of generating as much capital as possible, whilst disregarding the well-being of the surrounding area. Proposed future developments on the north bank of the Clyde illustrate the manner in which huge swathes of riverbank have gone from being the workplace of the working classes to the playground of the middle and upper classes. Hailed as the '...largest development

of its kind in Scotland' (*Herald* 15/02/06), the development is expected to create more than 10,000 jobs and '...include a giant casino, five-star hotel, shopping centre, 30 storey block of flats and a 10-screen cinema' (*Herald* 15/02/06). No doubt the development will provide a bonanza of new employment opportunities, but opportunities for whom? By the time the amount of skilled jobs is deducted from the 10,000, just how many opportunities will exist for unskilled workers? It is not inconceivable to expect that only a mere handful of unskilled people from Partick or Whiteinch will benefit from this development on their doorstep. Furthermore, Jim McNeil of Partick Community Council stresses that the type of entertainment provided by these developments are '...not for the local population. It's all meant for couples who are double income, no kids' (*Herald* 15/02/06). Others fear that Clydeside will become a 'middle class ghetto'.

The process of 'streamlining' in traditional industries as discussed by Esser and Hirsch with regard to the FRG did not happen effectively in Glasgow. A few attempts were made to modernise methods of production on Clydeside. Scott Lithgow's for example, began building super tankers in two halves but could not compete with foreign yards, as prefabricated ships began to leave the more efficient and purpose built South-east Asian shipyards in their hundreds. (Bellamy, M. 2001: 204). 'The No. 1 dock in the Okpo shipyard in Pusan (South Korea) is the world's largest, in which six different types of vessel can be constructed simultaneously' (Pacione, M. 2005: Plate 4). Given that 'streamlining' the national product was not ultimately successful, perhaps some feel that the time has come to 'streamline' the nation. 'Indeed, for Storper, the region (Scotland perhaps?) itself now represents a critical source of capitalism's 'becoming' (development), and a key, necessary element in the supply architecture for learning and innovation' (Jones, M. and MacLeod, G. 1999: 297). This country's leaders are, now looking to the nation that gave us fordism-capitalism in the first place and led the way internationally since WWII, again as they grapple with the crisis of post-fordism. The office of the deputy prime minister's take on urban development is significantly influenced by the work of the American Jane Jacobs (Imri, R. class lecture 15/03/2006). In her book *Cities and the wealth of nations: principles of economic life*, Jacobs again echoes some of Landes' and Diamond's unsettling sentiments as she writes concerning successful cities that they are places of messy vitality, known for both their avariciousness and surging civic

spirit (Jacobs, J. 1989). More opportunities for training, retraining, gaining qualifications or skills and adult education seem to exist in Scotland now than ever before. The Scottish population it seems are being increasingly harangued into becoming a nation of entrepreneurs, as the authorities here attempt to tap into this so-called 'spirit of initiative'. Enterprise quangos are the order of the day and the message from the top seems to be that one should haul oneself up by the boot straps, learn new skills, stop smoking and become a more health conscious, better educated and therefore more business wise individual. In doing so, perhaps a prestigious, white-collar appointment on the Clyde corridor or Edinburgh Forthside could become a reality for anyone willing to conform to the 'Americanisation' of this city.

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